

Cell Phones in Belgium

There are several cell phone options while living in Belgium. You can choose either a contract or buy a phone and add minutes as needed. Phones can be purchased at the Home Store on SHAPE or at various malls and shopping areas in Belgium starting as low as 30 Euros. There are three major service providers for mobile telephones in Belgium: Proximus, Mobistar and Base. Each company offers a range of services and packages, and it is always recommended to compare costs and conditions carefully before entering into a contract. Consider your usage, length of stay and budget.

You will need to decide if you want a fixed contract, a pay as you go contract or buy a new SIM card and pay for minutes as needed. All GSM phones contain a thumbnail-sized chip called a SIM card which determines your phone number and holds your phone's memory. The bookstore on SHAPE has a comparison of all the pay as you go options. A contract may offer special promotions, discounts or even include the cost of the phone. A pay as you go plan may be better for the occasional user or teenagers. The advantages of a pay as you go plan are no contracts, no credit card requirements, and no monthly fees. For pay as you go, Minutes are typically more expensive and you must buy a phone.

Cell Phone Contracts

To obtain a mobile phone contract, you will need to provide ID (passport), Proof of address (a utility bill, property rental contract or bank statement) and a Bank account IBAN number. There is a choice of either a **permanent** contract at a fixed monthly rate,

Here are some options for prepaid Plans websites are in English.

- -Proximus: Pay & Go (www.proximus.be)
- -Mobistar: Tempo (www.mobistar.be)
- -Base: BASE Advantage Bundles (www.base.be)

Pay As You Go Options

You can also purchase a new SIM Card from various companies like Proximus, Base, Mobistar, LYCA and ORTEL. They offer some promotions for calling the US and for recharging regularly. Most plans offer free in-coming calls. Recharging your phone is as easy as going to the bookstore or the GB and paying with cash or a bank card. Beware of roaming rates if you plan to use your phone in other European countries the rates can be quite high.

Can I use my current mobile phone in Belgium?

If you have a GSM purchased in Europe, Australia, or Asia your mobile phone should work just fine in Belgium, as long as your mobile can handle GSM 1800MHz. However, you will be paying roaming fees for incoming calls and outgoing calls unless you buy a SIM card specific for Belgium. Many phone companies "lock" their phones so they will not accept competitors' SIM cards. If you plan to use a GSM phone in more than one country, ask if the phone is SIM-locked before you buy it.

If you have a "tri-band" phone from the US or Canada, it may work, but the international rates may range from 99 cents to \$3.99 per minute for both incoming and outgoing calls. It would be cheaper to buy a new phone in Belgium. Telesial is a US-based company that sells Europe-compatible cell phones. Telesial's tri-band phones cost a little more; however, they have two-band phones, which work in Europe and most other parts of the world. Their phones are not SIM-locked, so you can buy a new card whenever you enter a new country (usually for around \$25). They also sell SIM cards and prepaid calling for certain countries so that you don't have to track them down when you arrive. Visit there website: www.telesial.com for more information.

Lost or stolen mobile phones

If your Cell phone is lost or stolen, report it to the SHAPE police and to your service provider. Give the IMEI number or details of the SIM card and the service provider will suspend service and block the telephone. The owner is responsible for payment for any calls made until the SIM is blocked unless they have taken out appropriate insurance with the supplier. Check your IMEI number by pressing ***#06#** write down the number in a safe and keep it separate from your phone.

Dialing Instructions

32 is the International Telephone Country Code for Belgium. **00** is the International Outgoing (Dialing) Code you use to call overseas from 'within Belgium. Telephone numbers in Belgium look like this: 065/00.00.00. The **65** is the city code and will vary depending on the location. When calling to Belgium from outside Belgium, dial +32 00(city code) 00 00 00 (6 digit phone number).

Please contact Financial Readiness at Army Community Service bldg. 318 on SHAPE if you have any problems with your cell phone contracts or would like more consumer information. DSN 423-5324 or CIV 065/44.53.24